

Reverend Horace L. Sheffield III has been a preacher in Detroit, Michigan since 1978. He is the pastor of Detroit's New Destiny Baptist Church and the executive director of the Detroit Association of Black Organizations, where he established and administers their Detroit Cares Academy (DCA) and Project Self-Sufficiency programs.

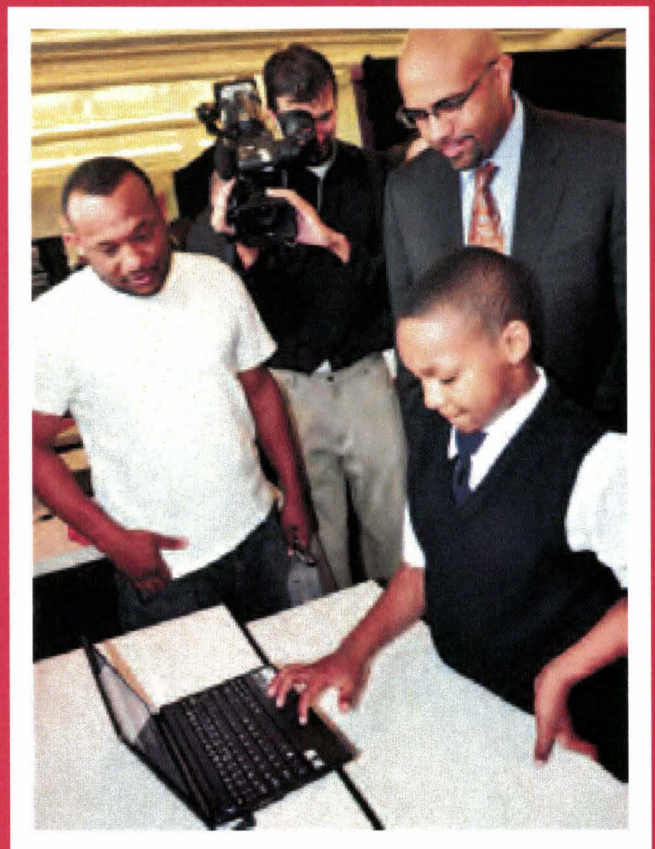
Reverend Sheffield and the DCA are using Internet Essentials to further facilitate the graduation of high school students who have either incomplete or failed classes and must earn credits to finish school. One of DCA's programs enables students to make up those credits by taking or finishing classes online.

The DCA keeps its computer lab open late in the evenings and weekends in an effort to serve students who may not have Internet access at home. With Internet Essentials, more families are able to have broadband access in their homes and thus fewer students are spending long hours and late nights at DCA's computer labs.

To promote Internet Essentials in his community, Reverend Sheffield regularly holds community forums with religious leaders, community activists, educators and others who service the specific population that is most at risk of being affected by the digital divide. Reverend Sheffield also uses his weekly radio program "On the Line with Reverend Horace Sheffield" and TV program "Real Talk" to spread the word about Internet Essentials.

Detroit

Comcast Vice President, External and Government Affairs Bret Perkins looks on as a student goes online at the Internet Essentials launch event in Detroit, MI.



When Comcast acquired its cable systems in the Greater Miami market in November 2002, the prior operator had not made broadband service available to the entire market. When Comcast took control, we built and executed a community investment strategy to ensure that:

- Broadband Internet service was available market-wide within 24 months;
- Anchor institutions, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Urban League, United Way and other community centers had courtesy high-speed Internet access so families that did not have broadband service at home could access the Internet; and
- The community had access to digital literacy and broadband adoption programs such as the Digital Connectors program with partners like Volunteer Broward, Elevate Miami and the YMCA.

When our community partners learned that we were committed to raising broadband adoption rates of low-income families they quickly became vocal champions of Internet Essentials. Based on their historic partnerships and experience with us in Miami, they knew we were serious and committed to this project. They also understood we would need their help. City Year of Miami, Elevate Miami, Urban League of Broward County, Volunteer Florida and the Cuban American National Council are some of the organizations that expressed their commitment to promote the program, and each immediately registered as a partner on our Internet Essentials Partner Portal and ordered free promotional materials. They distributed these materials during neighborhood meetings, canvassed their communities with Internet Essentials materials in English, Spanish and Creole, displayed Internet Essentials materials at their sites, and shared them with other community leaders and public and private service agencies with whom they partner, including local schools. Their partnership resulted in the Miami market having one of the highest response rates to Internet Essentials in the country.

Miami

Students use the Internet at the Internet Essentials launch event in Miami, FL.



We also recruited and engaged a network of more than 300 community-based organizations to provide in-person digital literacy training. We pre-screened organizations interested in providing training and qualified certain organizations as Internet Essentials Training Partners.

To become qualified, the community-based organization had to meet the following criteria:

- Have training facilities located in a Comcast service area;
- Have a computer lab with a projector and at least 10 working computers with Internet access;
- Have a facility with ample restrooms, handicap accessibility, nearby parking and easy access/proximity to public transportation; and
- Send at least one potential trainer to participate in a Comcast-led “train-the-trainer” session between late August and mid-October 2011.

All training partners received a copy of the Internet Essentials Training Facilitator’s Guide (in both English and Spanish), which was specially prepared by professionals at Comcast University in conjunction with significant digital literacy nonprofit partners such as One Economy, Common Sense Media and iKeepSafe, along with a USB flash drive with a copy of the Internet Essentials training presentation.

Before their scheduled trainings, each organization received customized promotional materials to share with their constituencies. Dates and locations of these sessions were also posted on the Internet Essentials website so customers could find local training opportunities.

Between August and December 2011, Internet Essentials training partners hosted nearly 300 digital literacy training sessions across the country with over 1,250 attendees. In-person digital literacy training sessions were delivered primarily in English and Spanish, with several sessions facilitated in other languages including Mandarin Chinese and Creole. While early enrollments were limited, expansion of outreach and promotional efforts by Internet Essentials training partners boosted attendance at later sessions, and we helped training partners to share best practices with one another.

We continue to review our training program with our partners, reviewing one-on-one and focus group feedback, trainer feedback, trainee surveys and training session observation forms to improve future Internet Essentials digital literacy training strategies, curriculum and outreach efforts.

A participant in the Comcast Digital connectors program works on a computer in Philadelphia, PA.

